

TAP FOR STOCKISTS

Global Interiors

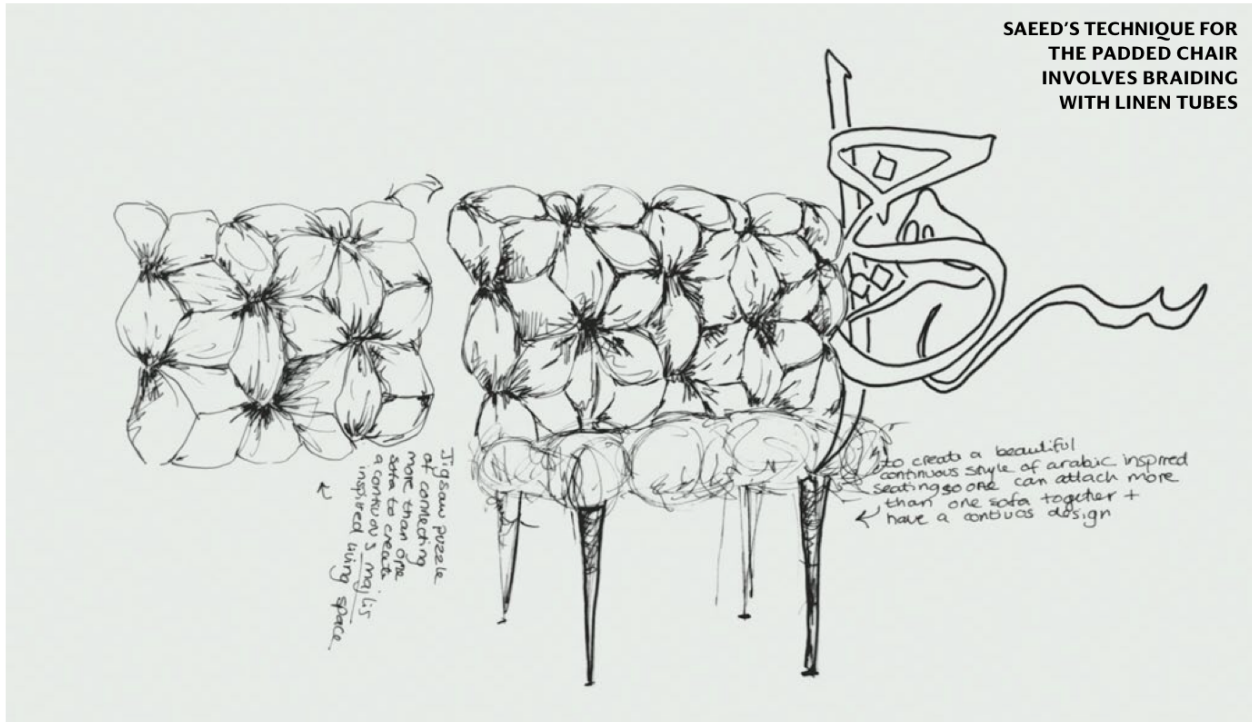


UAE

Design shapes up, plus Dubai's creative hub

PHOTOGRAPHY: LEANDRO FARINA INTERIORS: BENJAMIN KEMPTON

UAE



Design Days Dubai

The region's first design fair, DDD returns this March for its biggest edition yet

The brainchild of Cyril Zammit, DDD will see a total of 34 galleries from 20 different countries taking part, including newcomers such as Algeria, Pakistan and China. Now in its third year, the prestigious fair has quickly established itself as a meeting point for regional and international buyers and collectors interested in contemporary design. Held in a 3,500 sq m tent at the foot of the world's tallest tower, Burj Khalifa, the fair will host exhibitors such as Carwan Gallery from Lebanon, London- and Paris-based Carpenters Workshop Gallery, Croft from Seoul and Dubai-based FN Designs. *Design Days Dubai, 17 - 21 March 2014, www.designdaysdubai.ae. See Wallpaper's report on the fair, including local and international designers, at Wallpaper.com*

since its inception five years ago, this centre has become a hub of local established and up-and-coming artists and designers. This is all thanks to the vision of Sheikha Lateefa bint Maktoum bin Rashid Al Maktoum, a member of the ruling family and a notable artist, whose work was shown at the UAE Pavilion of the Venice Biennale in 2011.

Tashkeel was launched after Sheikha Lateefa realised that there was a need for an independent resource committed to developing the capabilities of local artists, as well as facilitating cross-cultural dialogue between creatives from all backgrounds, through residencies, exhibitions, seminars and screenings. As part of Tashkeel's commitment to nurturing local talent, the centre has commissioned three young Emirati designers to create bespoke pieces for the third instalment of the region's leading design fair – Design Days Dubai (DDD), taking place this March. According to Anabelle de Gersigny, Tashkeel's strategy and partnership development manager, this project is»

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part of a long-term initiative, which ‘highlights the skills of talented designers living in the UAE, uniting them with regional artisans, to develop a range of designs based on an aesthetic that is intrinsically from and for the UAE’.

Latifa Saeed, one of the selected designers, has been involved in Tashkeel’s programmes since its inception, and was invited to create a furniture piece for the Dubai fair – after Sheikha Lateefa happened to see a photo of a headboard created by the designer that was posted on her Instagram account. The artist explains that the design of her commissioned piece, titled ‘Pleated Chair’, grew out of her quest for the perfect headboard.

‘Unable to find one that was comfortable and child-friendly, I created my own. After a process of experimentation, I reimagined the classic buttoned headboard, and developed the technique of braiding linen cushion tubes and gathering them into clusters to create an undulating padded surface of an organic pattern,’ says Saeed, who holds a bachelor’s degree in arts and sciences from the Dubai-based Zayed University.

Another artist participating in DDD with a Tashkeel commission is Zeinab Al Hashemi, who specialises in conceptual art and site-specific installations. Al Hashemi will be using her knowledge of contemporary techniques for her project titled ‘Sa’nam’. The piece will be ‘a malleable and multifunctional sand carpet, made up of geometric shapes filled with sand and stitched out of camel leather’. It will be a portable type of seating for both outdoor and indoor use.

The third project, titled ‘Murmur’ is a conceptual piece by Salem Al Mansoori – an interdisciplinary designer with a background in computational engineering. Made from polyamide and acrylic, it is a collection of synthesised objects, designed, says Al Mansoori, to inspire dialogue and create an ambience of warmth.

Tashkeel’s collaboration with DDD is its first commercial venture, with works created under the project being solely available through the arts centre. Cyril Zammit, director of DDD, is pleased to see such an initiative supporting the role of the UAE as a producer, rather than just a buyer. »



ZEINAB AL HASHEMI
WITH PROTOTYPES FOR
A PREVIOUS PROJECT

‘Production seems to be a paradoxical challenge here, as the UAE is probably the best-equipped country in the Gulf when it comes to industry. We can produce and provide everything, from porcelain and plastic to wood and high-end camel leather, but the challenge is that there aren’t enough artisans to work with artists to produce a designer collection,’ says Zammit. But he remains optimistic. ‘We initiated some dialogue between the necessary authorities and the industry, and I’m confident that the nation’s vision for excellence will match the requirements of product design,’ he says.

Gersigny points out that because design is still relatively new in the region, many designers still face difficulties in being able to make the leap to practising full time. ‘Here in the UAE, they are disguised as journalists, architects or marketing executives. At Tashkeel, we see our support as key to the acceptance that design is a profession that is self-sustainable and even profitable. We’re also bringing awareness to the wider public, through our international residency programmes and professional fellowships.’

Gersigny is hopeful about the direction in which things are heading, saying there is a huge potential for growth. Eventually, she’d like to see ‘fewer slick spaces and more arenas for discourse, innovation and freedom of thought – more mess and more grit with unprecedented and dynamic output’. *

www.tashkeel.org

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Wallpaper* Middle East Revealed celebrates the region's design talents

DESIGN / 20 SEP 2014 / BY ROSA BERTOLI



Installation view of 'Wallpaper* Middle East Revealed', presented in association with Dubai Design District (d3) at this year's London Design Festival

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Wallpaper* Middle East Revealed celebrates the region's design talents

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The show includes Emirati designer and artist Latifa Saeed's 'Braided' chair and ottoman, featuring interlocked linen cushion tubes

Multidisciplinary, internationally educated and highly skilled, a new breed of Middle-Eastern creatives have built a thought-provoking narrative around the region's cultural identity for an exhibition at this year's London Design Festival. Presented in association with Dubai Design District (d3), 'Wallpaper* Middle East Revealed' features interdisciplinary design curated from seven Middle-Eastern countries, bringing together a dozen creatives working across furniture design, fashion and photography.

Wallpaper* editor-at-large and the exhibition's curator Suzanne Trocme was drawn to the rapidly developing creative identity in the Middle East. Geopolitical shifts, growing media interest and a flourishing of design events in the region, she says, are actively advancing this development.

The show includes a multifaceted range of talent, whose work contributes to mapping the area's cultural identities. Although diverse in practice, the twelve designers share a chameleon-like ability to adapt to new disciplines (all of them have at some point changed their creative path). Dubai-based Khalid Shafar, for example, started his career in marketing and communication before his reincarnation as a designer. Beirut-born Nadine Kanso's design production, meanwhile, is divided between her Nadine K lifestyle line (including home accessories, apparel and artworks) and her jewellery brand Bil Arabi.

Similarly, these creatives to interpret their cultural symbols as sophisticated contemporary forms. Emirati photographer Lamyia Gargash's works explore architecture and its ever-changing and renewing aspects, documenting abandoned spaces in both public and private buildings throughout the UAE. Aljoud Lootah's 'Unfolding Unity Stool', meanwhile, echoes some of the traditional Arabic motifs that she regularly explores in her fashion and art works.